



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker — Dominic Sherony



Wrinkled Shield Lichen — Susan Squires



Gray-cheeked Thrush — Bruce Mactavish

SSAC Activity Report

2010-2011

Prepared by the Species Status Advisory Committee

**Annual Activity Report
Species Status Advisory Committee
2010-11**

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Message from the Chairperson

I am pleased to provide the Annual Activity Report for the Species Status Advisory Committee (SSAC). The mandate of the SSAC is derived from section 6 of the *Endangered Species Act*, 2001, which provides for an Advisory Committee to review the status of species at risk, to recommend to the Minister, designations and re-designations of species and to advise the Minister on related designation matters. Given the Committee's current mandate, the SSAC provides support for, but does not contribute directly to, the Department's strategic directions.

The SSAC is a category 3 government entity and as such, in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, is required to provide annual performance reports based on activities in the preceding calendar year. Such a report is also required of the SSAC under the *Endangered Species Act*, 2001. This report presents an overview of the SSAC and our accomplished objectives in 2010-11. It is the intention of the SSAC to report on the same Objectives and Indicators in each year, thereby providing a reference for the following year. As Chair of the SSAC for the period 2010-11, I am pleased to report that the committee successfully achieved all objectives set forth in its activity plan for 2010-11. I also attest that the SSAC is accountable for the preparation of this report and for the results explained herein.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Christine Campbell
Chair, SSAC
July 28, 2011

Overview of the Committee

a. Key Statistics

Three new reports were commissioned with final review expected in 2011-2012: one report is in review and contracts are being finalized for the other two reports. An additional report commissioned in 2008-2009 is in the final stages of revisions with final review expected in 2011-2012. Three assessments were completed based on two reports commissioned 2009-2010. Four recommendations based on these assessments and one completed in 2008-2009 were submitted to the Government during the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Also, two recommendations for species assessed as 'Not at Risk' and 'Data Deficient' were submitted to the Director of Wildlife during the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

b. Representation

This SSAC consists of up to nine (9) members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. Members serve for a period of two (2) or three (3) years; and are eligible for re-appointment.

At the end of 2010-11, the committee had seven members:

Dr. Christine Campbell (Chair) - Aquatic invertebrates

Dr. Luise Hermanutz - Plant ecology, conservation biology

Dr. Thomas Knight – Freshwater fish, small mammals

Dr. Paul Marino – Mosses, terrestrial invertebrates

Mr. John E. Maunder - General natural history, plants, invertebrates

Dr. William Montevecchi - Birds

Mr. Mac Pitcher – General natural history, lichens

Committee members serve as volunteers. They normally meet in person twice a year. Meetings may also be held via telephone or other telecommunication devices. The committee normally contracts the preparation of species status reports to private consultants.

The secretariat to the SSAC is provided by the Wildlife Division and managed by:

Endangered Species and Biodiversity Program, Wildlife Division

Department of Environment and Conservation

PO Box 2007, 117 Riverside Dr., Corner Brook, NL, A2H 7S1

c. Description of Revenues and Expenditures

A total of \$13,311.86 of an allocated \$15,000 was spent on SSAC related activities in 2010-11. A breakdown: \$5,631.36 on reports, \$436.18 on catering and room rental, and \$7244.84 on travel (airfare, hotels, meals).

Travel, accommodations and related costs, as well as contractual fees, are provided for within the account budget of the Wildlife Division, Department of Environment and Conservation.

d. Lines of Business

The Species Status Advisory Committee undertakes the following line of business:

1. Advises government on the designation and re-designation of species under the *Endangered Species Act*.

The Committee's duties include:

- developing, and submitting to the Minister, criteria for the designation of a species;
- developing criteria for species status reports that facilitate a review of the status of the species;
- commissioning and receiving species status reports;
- making recommendations to the Minister about designating species and protecting critical and recovery habitat;
- referring concerns about the status of species to COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada), when the species is of national importance;
- maintaining a list of species for future review of their status
- conducting periodic reviews of the status of designated species at least once every 10 years after the designation; and,
- submitting a report to the Minister on its activities in the preceding calendar year, before April 15 of each year.

Copies of Annual Reports, Status reports can be found on the Wildlife Division's website at: <http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html>

e. Mandate

The mandate of the Species Status Advisory Committee is derived from section 6 of the *Endangered Species Act, 2001*, which provides for an Advisory Committee to review and recommend to the Minister designations and re-designations of species.

f. Vision

The vision of the Species Status Advisory Committee is the perpetuation of viable populations of all native species in Newfoundland and Labrador.

g. Mission

By 2011, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have made recommendations to the responsible minister about the conservation status of a targeted selection of high priority species representing diverse taxonomic groups.

Measure: Recommendations are made.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Priority lists are developed	Completed 2008-2011. See SSAC Annual Report http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html
Status reports on species are commissioned	21 status reports were commissioned between 2008 and 2011.
Species status is assessed and reassessed as necessary	The status of 18 species was assessed and one species' status was reassessed between 2008 and 2011.
Recommendations are provided to the responsible minister	16 assessment recommendations were provided to the Minister between 2008 and 2011.
Guidelines for consistent production and review of status reports are annually reviewed (and revised if necessary)	Status report template was reviewed annually and revised in 2008 and 2009.
Evaluation of criteria for the assessment of species status is annually reviewed (and revised if necessary)	Completed 2008-2011.
Guidelines for the evaluation of status reports are implemented	Completed in 2008.

Highlights and Accomplishments

The committee started the year with eight members. Mr. Roger Gallant resigned in September 2010. Therefore at the end of 2010-2011, the committee consisted of seven members.

Two additional members, with expertise in the area of insects or the Labrador region, are currently being sought.

The committee met three times in 2010-11: April 21, 2010 in St. John's, June 21, 2010 via teleconference, and October 7 and 8, 2010 in St. John's.

The committee met all its objectives for the 2010-2011 year.

Activities

The activities of the Species Status Advisory Committee are guided by the *Endangered Species Act* and the *Species Status Advisory Committee Regulations*; this is not only reflected in the

committee's line of business but also in the objectives, measures and indicators established in their initial Activity Plan. Appendix A presents the appropriate portions of the legislation that have been used to establish the committee's objectives, measures and indicators. It is the intention of the SSAC to report on the same Objectives and Indicators in each year, thereby providing a reference for the following year.

Objective 1: By 2011, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have processed 2 to 5 species status reports annually, depending on the availability of resources and expertise.

Measure: Processed reports

Indicators	Accomplishments
Number of reports commissioned and reviewed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arctic Hare (<i>Lepus arcticus</i>); author Dr. Brian Hearn, commissioned in 2008-2009, reviewed and edited in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, final review and assessment expected 2011-2012. 2. Red Pine (<i>Pinus resinosa</i>) – author Bruce Roberts, commissioned in 2010-2011, final review and assessment expected 2011-2012. 3. Wrinkled Shield Lichen (<i>Pannaria lurida</i> ssp. <i>russellii</i>), field report commissioned in 2009-2010, field work completed by Emilie Kissler in 2010-2011, seeking status report author. 4. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>) status report reviewed in 2010-2011. 5. Gray-cheeked Thrush (<i>Catharus minimus</i>) status report reviewed in 2010-2011.
Number of species assessed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>) status assessed in 2010-2011. 2. Gray-cheeked Thrush (<i>Catharus minimus</i>) status was reassessed – on the basis of new information presented in the updated report, <i>C. minimus</i> within the province is now recognized as consisting of two subspecies: Newfoundland Gray-cheeked Thrush (<i>C. minimus minimus</i>) and Northern Gray-cheeked Thrush (<i>C. minimus aliciae</i>). The two subspecies were assessed separately within a single report in 2010-2011.
Recommendations provided to the responsible Minister	Recommendations for three species assessed in 2009-2010 and one species assessed in 2008-2009 were forwarded to the Minister in 2010-2011.

Objective 2: By 2011, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have re-evaluated existing priority lists and developed new priority lists for future status assessments.

Measure 1: Existing priority lists are evaluated

Indicators	Accomplishments
Existing priority lists are revised as necessary	Completed for 2010-11. Taxonomic priority lists were reviewed by members and revised as necessary.
Existing priority lists are published in the Annual Report and made public.	Completed for 2010-11. See SSAC Annual Report http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html

Measure 2: New assessment lists are developed, as required.

Indicators	Accomplishments
An assessment list is prepared to identify taxa for species status assessments.	Completed for 2010-11.
Assessment list is published in the Annual Report and made public.	Completed in 2010-11. See SSAC Annual Report http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html

Objective 3: By 2011, the Species Status Advisory Committee will have reviewed report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria and revised them as required.

Measure 1: Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are reviewed and revised.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are reviewed	SSAC reviewed these this year but no changes were required.
Report preparation guidelines and assessment criteria are revised as	Completed in 2010-11. Reviewed all guidelines and criteria used for assessments and compared to COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) procedures. SSAC has decided to maintain the current guidelines and criteria and will review and revise

required.	them in 2011-2012 if appropriate.
Any revisions to the report preparation guidelines are published in the Annual Report and made public.	See SSAC Annual Report for report preparation template. http://www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/wildlife/endangeredspecies/ssac/index.html

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The potential addition of two new members, one with expertise in invertebrates and one with knowledge of Labrador next year will ensure greater coverage of taxonomic groups and an increase in regional expertise. The committee has reviewed several potential candidates with either invertebrate expertise or knowledge of Labrador; all candidates could support the committee and provide a great deal of valuable information. Predetermining information needs and expertise that will be required is a challenge as species needing detailed assessments don't always fall into a specific taxa or geographic area. The legislated limit of 9 seats on the committee continues provide challenges when deliberating on potential members.

Finding authors to prepare status reports continues to be a significant challenge. With the growing list of candidate species the SSAC, as a volunteer body will also face challenges to the members to find adequate time to carry out report reviews and do the other tasks associated with membership. The SSAC also considers that it needs timely feedback to its recommendations.

Financial Statements

Expenditures on the SSAC are included in the expenditures reported for the Wildlife Division. This committee does not require an audited financial statement.

Appendix A: Legislation relevant to the mandate and activities of the SSAC

(Source: Endangered Species Act)

6. (1) A species status advisory committee is established to review and recommend to the minister designations and re-designations of species.

(2) The SSAC shall base its decisions on the best scientific knowledge available to it and on traditional ecological and local ecological knowledge about a species.

11. (1) The SSAC shall

(a) develop and submit to the minister, criteria for the designation of a species under sections 7 and 9;

(b) develop criteria for species status reports which facilitate a review of the status of a species;

(c) commission and receive status reports;

(d) make recommendations to the minister about designating species and the protection of critical and recovery habitat;

(e) refer concerns about the status of species to COSEWIC where the species is of national importance;

(f) maintain a list of species for future review of their status;

(g) conduct periodic reviews of the status of designated species, at least once every 10 years after the designation;

(h) submit a report to the minister on the activities of the committee in the preceding calendar year, before April 15 of each year; and

(i) perform other duties that may be prescribed in the regulations made under subsection 44(1).

(2) the SSAC shall make the following documents available to the public:

(a) species status reports;

(b) criteria for designation of a species; and

(c) annual reports submitted under paragraph 11(1)(h) within 30 days after the report is released to the minister.

12. (1) the SSAC shall consult with groups or individuals that have traditional and local ecological knowledge about a species and its habitat.

(2) Traditional ecological and local ecological knowledge shall be considered by the SSAC in evaluating the status of a species.